

**OHIO VALLEY CHAMBER MUSIC PRESENTERS**  
**MINUTES, Quarterly Meeting 6/25/05**

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 25 at the University Club in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Present were:

Robin Hicks, Louisville  
Jeff Huntington, Yellow Springs  
Audrey Luna, Chamber Music Cincinnati  
Ivan Mueller, Chamber Music Columbus  
Nancy Nolan, Chamber Music Cincinnati  
Acton Ostling, Louisville Chamber Music Society  
Susan Pace, Linton Music  
Jo Anne Warren, Chamber Music Cincinnati

**501©3 Status:** Jo Anne Warren reported that she is still waiting to receive the corporate charter with everyone's signatures. It has been sent around to the various groups, and Jo Anne believes it is now in Cleveland. The question arose whether not having the 501©3 would prevent OVCMP from procuring a grant from CMA for the David Bury training session. It was understood that, as long as the application is in process, we should be eligible for the grant. **Jo Anne will pursue the charter signatures, and then proceed with completion of the non-profit incorporation.** The IRS and Ohio require an updated membership roster, various forms which she has completed, articles of incorporation, statement of purpose, by-laws, statement from the treasurer, plus a check for \$150 by September 1. The bank account for the organization has been closed, as there were no funds left. **Groups will be paying dues, allowing Jeff to re-open the account in time to write this check.** Once we are up and running, we will have to file income tax returns.

**David Bury consultancy:** **We should go ahead and appeal to the CMA for the Bury grant, and plan an organization retreat, as soon as possible.**

**George Crumb block booking:** Susan Page had talked to Dick Waller about the Crumb block booking possibility for Fall of 2006-07. Dick believes we should move on this sooner than later, as Mr. Crumb is not getting any younger. Louisville has already booked their 06-07 season, but this could be presented as a special stand-alone program, perhaps as a fundraiser. Could there be other organizations who are not members of OVCMP who might be interested? Vanguard Series in Dayton was suggested, as was Wittenberg University. College romance language departments, as well as music, might be interested. Louisville's Fall Festival might also be interested in hosting the program, separately from the chamber series. It could be tricky getting a grant for this program if not all of the participants are members of OVCMP. As membership for our organization is so reasonable, it makes sense for any organization to join for a year to realize the savings in booking fees this project would realize. Susan reported that Dick would like to make a decision by September. Jeff noted that his booking committee is sensitive about block booking efforts, not wanting to be railroaded into artistic commitments they aren't sure

about. In any case, they don't start booking until late September. Would it be possible to book the group for the 07-08 season? Ivan suggested that one group take leadership and come up with a firm proposal upon which each of us can ponder. Jeff reminded the group that Yellow Springs is limited in the amount of fees it can handle. Susan noted that the reduced rate would be \$7,500 per performance, and suggested that 3 or 4 groups at the minimum would be sufficient to make the booking worthwhile. Audrey Luna suggested that the Crumb group might be counter to Chamber Music Cincinnati's mission, as it is not an established ensemble. Jo Anne Warren thought Chamber Music Cincinnati would be willing to make this a special concert, perhaps a fundraiser. Audrey mentioned that the group, with George Crumb, had been at CCM in 2004, and perhaps it's too soon to bring them back, especially if we would be looking to CCM for marketing support. Jeff mentioned they were also in Dayton in 2004. **Susan Pace offered to at least look into the possibility of a 2006-07 booking, with a backup plan for 07-08.**

Jeff noted that he'd heard the Tetzlaff Quartet in Florence, and would love to consider them for a block booking, but could not find their agent. Ivan suggested contacting CMA. Audrey suggested contacting Tetzlaff's agent. Perhaps Carol Perlstein, a friend of Tetzlaff's, would know. **Audrey will ask her.**

**Thomas Larcher commission:** Audrey Luna announced that a grant for \$12,400 has been received for a commissioned work by Larcher, to be performed by Artemis Quartet. Apparently the agent for Artemis is in disagreement with the group's willingness to reduce its fee to \$7,500. She told Audrey their fee is now \$12,000 per performance. She would be willing to reduce the fee to \$9,000 each for 4 or 5 concerts. Right now, the block schedule looks like this:

April 8, 2008 - Northern KY University

April 9 - Indianapolis

April 10-11 --Chamber Music Cincinnati (with one of these days off)

April 12 - Columbus

April 13 - Louisville

Audrey mentioned that the *Salzberger Festspiel* might be willing to co-commission the work and absorb a portion of the cost. This would also present some good public relations opportunities.

Robin Hicks expressed disappointment at the higher fee. **Acton** agreed; although it would probably not present a major problem, his program committee would have to approve the higher rate. **He will approach them with this information.** He also mentioned that the Ohio Arts Council has a granting opportunity for artists of international stature. Ivan agreed, but noted that anyone going to the OAC for funding for this program should be careful not to mention Chamber Music Columbus when they do, as it could hurt their other funding requests to OAC. OAC doesn't like it when organizations "double dip." It was agreed that the fee could be \$7,500 but no more than \$9,000 for this program. Acton suggested we make sure the dates planned do not conflict with the Easter weekend. The group checked, and it does not. **Audrey is to write a grant in support of the Larcher/Artemis project to submit to the Ohio Arts Council.**

**Cello/Tango:** Audrey mentioned the CelloProject as a block booking program. It has not attracted the interest she thought it would. She noted that they will be in Cincinnati for two weeks in 2006 (April 26 – May 13, '06), performing for CMC's new Music NOW! festival, then on to Detroit and Austin, Texas. Their fee is only \$2,500, and that includes educational programs. Acton thought the Louisville School of Music might be interested, as well as Speed Museum. Audrey noted that the group has a varied repertoire, not limited to tango music.

**Executive Director hire:** Audrey reported that Chamber Music Cincinnati has decided to hire an executive director, and hopes to have one in place by August 1. The average salary for this position around the country is approximately \$55,000. These salaries can range from \$25,000 to Detroit's headier amount (so high they wouldn't share it!). Jeff noted that that salary equals his entire budget for a year. Audrey mentioned that James Tocco, of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, encouraged her to seek out a director who could raise funds for the organization. Jo Anne Warren stated that the CMCinti began its endowment in 1981 with approximately \$105,000 solicited from subscribers. It has grown over the years to approximately \$450,000. Someone asked what verbiage that initial letter contained. **Jo Anne will find a copy and share it with the group.** Ivan noted that the general consensus is that half of the executive directors in organizations are good, and the other half bad. The board must be careful to hire someone who will be creative and take leadership, but not take over the organization. **Jo Anne recommended the book *Boards That Make a Difference*, by John Carver.** It's only about 300 pages, and well worth the time.

**Strategic Planning:** Robin Hicks asked what other groups have done in the way of strategic planning. Audrey reported that CMCinti has begun a strategic planning session this year and will continue the process. The biggest thing that came from their meetings was the decision to hire a director. They met 7 times, mostly during the evenings, with a paid facilitator. The cost was approximately \$150 per hour. Facilitator attended 3 of the 7 meetings. Ivan reported they received a matching grant from CMA to pay \$4,000 to David Bury. He sent a questionnaire to all board members, as well as selected subscribers and friends of the organization. Then, he put together a list of items that needed to be addressed by the board. He met with the board for 2 days, first talking to the Executive committee, then to the entire board and selected visitors. Two weeks later he submitted a report with suggested action items. Based on those, the board put together a 5 year plan. This plan is used in all grant proposals. **The group asked if Ivan would be willing to share David Bury's report, and he agreed to send it to the membership of OVCMP.**

Robin Hicks led a discussion regarding the topics of **ticketing, database, and fundraising.** Robin asked how others handle database maintenance. Indy's system is very basic. Yellow Springs uses a volunteer. CMCinti uses Excel. Other programs mentioned were Filemaker Pro and Access. The question of what happens when a staff person/volunteer resigns or retires is a major one. Procedural policies should be put in writing and training backups should be mandatory. Ivan reported that they use a

professional box office company, the down side being that they cannot capture data from single ticket sales. They also charge a service fee of \$1 per ticket. CMColumbus collects data through a raffle at the door, where audience members are invited to fill out pink slips with personal info, on the chance of winning a CD. This works very well. They also offer a 25% discount to subscribers if they bring a friend into the subscriber pool. Either subscriber (old or new) can use the discount. Ivan mentioned that there is a way to put your database online so several people in the organization can have access to it. Nancy suggested that the number of people with access should be limited, to reduce opportunity for inaccuracy.

**Yellow Springs Season:** Jeff talked about the Yellow Springs upcoming season, remarking that they have many strong performances scheduled.

**Block booking:** Jeff mentioned that two winners of their international competition show promise for future block booking ventures. They are the Kashi String Quartet and the David Trio. If the David wins the KLR next year, we'll have them anyway, although Jeff thought it might be too soon for them to garner the prize. Someone asked when the KLR winners are announced. No one knew. Jeff will find out. We can still think about David as plan A, until we know whether they win the KLR. Their fee is only \$3,000 plus expenses. We ought to be working 5 years out with booking, at any rate, and can start thinking about these groups for the future. It was noted that having an Ohio group increases the chance for OAC funding.

**Marketing Survey:** reviewed the results of the marketing survey sent to all members. Citing no particular surprises in the outcomes, a few items seemed worth discussing. Radio spots seem to be the best buy for the money for those who can afford it. It's difficult to measure results, however. It's not always clear why people buy, or where they heard. Nancy noted that it's a compendium of messages from different sources that can often tip the purchase, and the buyer doesn't always know which message did the tipping. Ivan noted that they purchase program ads in other arts venues, the average cost being around \$140 per ad. The possibility of finding a corporate sponsor for a block booking project for OVCMP was discussed. Finding a company that does business in all our locations is key. Fifth Third Bank, Toyota, and Ross Laboratories were mentioned as possibilities. **JoAnne offered to call Charlene Byrum, a former colleague, who has a relationship with Toyota.**

Other methods of attaining visibility mentioned include: annual reports to all subscribers; working on the public television Action Auction wearing CMColumbus T shirts; audience surveys (70% of Columbus audience at Takacs turned theirs in!). Robin said that mainstream TV is too shotgun, but targeting certain programs (i.e. eighth blackbird with VH1 or MTV) with certain stations could be beneficial. Jeff noted that marketing does more than sell tickets: it increases visibility in the community, recruits volunteers, engages audiences to get excited about the product and the organization, speaks to the quality of life of the community. Columbus uses 25% of their annual budget on marketing initiatives. Last year, they decided to cut their marketing budget by \$5,000, and noticed no loss of sales. Cuts included ads in the art movie theatres. Nancy asked

who sells tickets on their web sites. Several in attendance do not yet have that capability. Nancy asked if the organization had considered starting up a joint web site, with links to each group. Jeff thought it sounded like a good idea. **Jo Anne noted that Bob Wilhelm had volunteered to do something along these lines. Jo Anne will check with him.** Robin noted that you have to find ways to drive people to a web site, and that all marketing tactics should include the web site on them.

Ivan asked why Chamber Music Cincinnati decided to change its name. Audrey said it was to get rid of the word “society”, indicating a closed club. Columbus was the trailblazer in this regard. Jo Anne referred to a recent talk by ASOL’s Henry Vogel in Cincinnati, and how he believes classical music organizations have created the image “that is now biting them in the butt.” We need more diversity, less formality (tuxedos: where else do people dress like that?), more acceptance of unfamiliar audiences, less forbidding body language. Talking about the music before the performance can really help audiences acclimate. Ivan said, “This is a way of receiving music that will be lost forever.”

**The next meeting will be hosted by Chamber Music Columbus on September 24<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. Location TBA.** Ivan moved that the meeting be adjourned. Susan Pace seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:35.

Respectfully submitted,

7/12/05